

## Letting kids be kids



Being a physiotherapist is more than just a job for Fatima Vido-Vecchio. It's a calling she's been passionate about for 20 years – with seven years spent at BC Children's Hospital.

"Seeing these children and their families going through a hard time puts things into perspective, and makes your problems seem a lot smaller than you think they are," says Fatima, who works with everyone from babies to young adults. "It teaches you a lot of patience and understanding – skills you maybe take for granted."

Her patients and their families are often struggling with devastating diagnoses, like Duchenne muscular dystrophy – which primarily affects boys and leads to the progressive loss of muscle function and weakness. It's the most common condition that Fatima sees in the neuromuscular clinic.

Whether she's assessing the functional abilities of a small baby, improving a five-year-old's range of motion or helping a ten-year-old develop muscle strength, Fatima is always asking herself: "How can I improve their quality of life?"

"I believe that a child is only as disabled as the environment lets them be. If you adapt the environment so the child is able to participate, then the child doesn't have a disability. It's the environment that causes the disability. For instance, if a child is visiting a friend and they're in a wheelchair, and that friend's house doesn't have a ramp, the child isn't having difficulty getting into the house; it's the house that's not providing access."

She's curious by nature and loves being a detective. This includes investigating new ways to make treatment fun for every child. Kids are authentic and will let you know if something is hurting or making them upset, Fatima says. So, making activities as fun as possible keeps their mind off the important work they're doing.

It was curiosity that brought Fatima to Canada, too. Originally from Brazil, Fatima wanted to travel so she took a job in Canada. Little did she know she would give up the sun and fun of South America after meeting a teacher from Nelson, BC and getting married.

Trying new things to get better outcomes is why Fatima is on board with the Clinical and Systems Transformation (CST) project, which is designed to improve the quality, safety and consistency of patient care across the Provincial Health Services Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care.

“I’m looking forward to having access to information when I need it, rather than having to request a chart and it takes a couple days to get to me. And if I add my assessment or notes to a chart, other people who are caring for that patient will also have access to that information in the new shared system.”

It’s a step in the right direction towards the future of health care – a future where it’s easier for people like Fatima to do what they do best: provide outstanding patient care. “Many patients have made their mark in my life, inspiring me and touching my life in different ways,” she says. “I hope to be helpful to these kids and their families with the skills and abilities that I have too.”

## Background information

The Clinical and Systems Transformation project is a joint initiative of three health organizations: Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Health Services Authority and Providence Health Care. The project is designed to transform healthcare delivery systems and processes to improve the safety, quality and consistency of the patient and caregiver experience. CST will support the health organizations in establishing common clinical and process standards, including work flows, order sets, clinical guidelines integrated plans of care and a common electronic health record. This clinical transformation will be supported by the implementation of a clinical information system that will replace aging existing systems. The project will be implemented in stages across the health organizations.

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